GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:132
ANSWERED ON:27.11.2001
U.S. FUNDING FOR STEM CELL RESEARCH
ALE NARENDRA;GANGASANDRA SIDDAPPA BASAVARAJ

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether some institutes in the World have been declared eligible for US Government stem cell research funding;

(b) if so, the Indian Institutes included in the list for US assistance for stem cell research in the country;

(c) whether Indian scientists are keen on this and the extent to which it will facilitate more research;

(d) whether these Indian institutes have to take clearance before carrying out further research on stem cells and lines;

(e) if so, whether any clearance has been sought by them;

(f) whether cell lines held by Indian firms have begun the long process of proving their identity and usefulness as stem cells; and

(g) if so, the details thereof ?

Answer

MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI)

(a) & (b) : Yes Sir, ten institutes in the world have been declared by U.S. Government as eligible to receive funding for stem cell research. The Indian Institutes included in the list are Reliance Life Sciences (a subsidiary of Reliance Industries), Mumbai and National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore.

(c) : The Indian scientists are interested to carry out the research work in this field. It will be helpful to collaborate with other scientists in the world specially for medical therapeutics. Joint efforts would expedite the development of therapies or products.

(d) & (e) : Yes Sir, Indian Institutes involved in stem cell research would require clearance from their respective Institutional Bioethics Committee. Two of Indian institutions included in US list for funding are developingthese cell lines for cell based therapies. These institutions have got clearance from their respective Institutional Bioethics Committee. Depending on the exact research protocol the clearance procedure would be followed as per the national policies and guidelines.

(f) & (g) : One of the Indian firms, Reliance Life Sciences Group (a Reliance Industry Subsidiary), Mumbai has seven stem cell lines. Four of them are in advanced stages, whereas, three are being developed. The work on characterisation of these stem cell lines has been initiated. The National Centre for Biological Sciences has embryonic stem cells, from which the cell lines would be developed.